

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-14. (cancelled)

15. (currently amended) A genetic construct for the expression of a nucleic acid sequence in plant stomatal guard cells, said construct comprising: the nucleic acid sequence functionally linked to the promoter of SEQ ID NO: 1, or to a fragment thereof having promoter activity, wherein said promoter fragment contains a sequence selected from the group consisting of: SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, and SEQ ID NO: 4.

16. (previously presented) The construct of claim 15, wherein said promoter fragment contains SEQ ID NO: 2.

17. (previously presented) The construct of claim 15, wherein said promoter fragment contains SEQ ID NO: 3.

18. (previously presented) The construct of claim 15, wherein said promoter fragment contains SEQ ID NO: 4.

19. (withdrawn) The construct of claim 15, wherein the nucleic acid sequence or the encoded product are involved in the intracellular signalling pathway modulated by abscisic acid (ABA).

20. (withdrawn) The construct of claim 19, wherein said nucleic acid sequence contains the coding sequences of Osml, Rac1, Kat1, Ost1 or Chl1 genes.

21. (withdrawn) The construct of claim 19, wherein said nucleic acid sequence codes for an antisense RNA.

22. (previously presented) A plant expression vector containing a genetic construct according to claim 15.

23. (previously presented) The vector of claim 22, which is a bacterial plasmid, a bacterial artificial chromosome (BAC), a yeast artificial chromosome (YAC), a viral vector or a vector for Agrobacterium-mediated DNA transfer.

24. (previously presented) The vector of claim 22, which is a binary vector for Agrobacterium-mediated DNA transfer.

25. (previously presented) A monocotyledonous or dicotyledonous plant containing a vector according to claim 22.

26. (withdrawn - currently amended) A method for the expression of nucleic acid sequences in plant stomatal guard cells, said method comprising introducing into said plant stomatal guard cells a the vector according to claim 22.

27. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 26, wherein said heterologous sequence is involved in the regulation of stoma aperture/closure.

28. (withdrawn) A method for regulating the expression of nucleic acid sequences in a plant, which comprises introducing in said plant, in a vegetative or reproductive part thereof, a genetic construct according to claim 15.

29. (previously presented) A monocotyledonous or dicotyledonous plant containing a construct according to claim 15.

30. (withdrawn - currently amended) A method for the expression of nucleic acid sequences in plant stomatal guard

cells, said method comprising introducing into said plant stomatal guard cells a construct according to claim 15.

31. (withdrawn) A method for regulating the expression of nucleic acid sequences in a plant, which comprises introducing in said plant, in a vegetative or reproductive part thereof, a vector according to claim 22.

32. (currently amended) A genetic construct for the expression of a nucleic acid sequence in plant stomatal guard cells, said construct comprising[[:]] the nucleic acid sequence functionally linked to the promoter of SEQ ID NO: 1, ~~or to the promoter having at least 95% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 1 and that has the activity of said promoter.~~